

1967

The Pentagram

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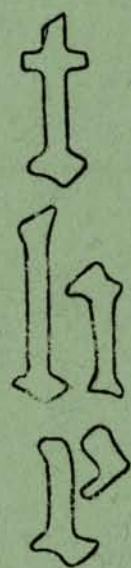
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the editors

Gemette McGuire
Bill Armstrong
Jim M. Harris
Sonny Hyles

the PENTAGRAM

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SECONDS ARE BEST

"Time's Fruit"

Today
used to the core
rots
in Time's wastecan.

But tomorrow
will redden,
whole as a pippin,
for Time's fruitpan.

Conrad Pendleton

"Walk"

Walking cured the group
The town had faults
Mayor Frees always says
Innocent
Even when abortionists clog
Drains with embryos
What about that Jew's plastic
Tombstones?

Saves money

He ain't got no relatives

Do you?

?

My horoscope says the Commies
Started a rumor

Yea

Soap causes cancer

Psychosomatic leprosy

EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT

(That'll be ten cents, sir)

Wow, a whole dollar, thank you!

150,000,000 AMERICANS DIE OF LEPROSY; CAUSE UNKNOWN

Sir

You'll have to return to your room now

You've walked enough today.

Charles T. Guy

"Sad Farewell"

Now then! Now then! We are through.
We must break up, me and you.
Though it breaks my heart to stand,
And see you leave for a foreign land,
I must be brave and wait,
Patiently beside the gate
Hurry back is my adieu,
Remember love that I am true.
Remember when the guns do ring,
The days we used to sit and sing.
Maybe this will keep you gay,
On your dull and dreary way.
Remember me! Remember me!
While you are way across the sea,
And the love that waits for you.

Gemette McGuire

"Bird"

To the bird
hanging by his head
stuck between two boards
in the side
of an old house,
HAPPY BIRD HEAVEN

Joe Bobb

Hudson

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"Notes From a Country Parson"

I remember that awful, pride-wounding shock in the soul-searching epiphany of the words of that unknown preacher who spoke the words: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

In an instant I experienced the complete intuition, both spiritual and material, of the utter contingency, the finiteness, of my life in the impersonal realm of the social order.

As I thought back to the world around us that drowns us in education, newspapers, magazines, and television I realized that there was never any mention of the single most important and inevitable thing in all our lives -- death. We all lived as if it didn't exist.

In despair, I attempted to reorganize my life, making all the facets of the social order subordinate to that great inevitability. My attempts were doomed to end in despair.

It was then that I realized a new order must come into existence: not merely the shuffling of these social values such as prestige, power, and wealth, but the elimination of them. With the realization of death came my desire for an authentic personal existence as separated from the social order as was possible.

The problem was how to accept death as a thing of positive value, which I knew I must do in order to make my life personally meaningful. I made a gamble and it became a successful wager.

First of all, I threw out the Sunday School mythology, which had always been incorporated in my idea of God. Second, I threw out the many shortcomings of organized Christianity, which made me antagonistic toward the very mention of the word 'God'. Last of all, I went back to the mysterious parables of Jesus and interpreted each of them as if He were talking to me, Twentieth Century creature that I am.

For the first time since my epiphany of death, I had a way to fit that inescapable event in as the ultimate value in my life. In that one memorable instant of time, I realized that the Carpenter of Nazareth spoke for me as well as Himself, when He said: "My Kingdom is not of this world."

Bill Armstrong

"Art"

What place has art when from the soul
It's taken, then placed in towers
To be kicked in idle hours
By lads who from the world have stole?

How ranked is it when sits away
For stuffy fools to buy for walls,
Created by the man who stalls
All his time in lofty array?

By itself it sends us screaming,
People has it to give it meaning.

Jim Harris

"How the Old Man Came"

He plays his lute,
His toothless smile
And vacant eyes
Showing passion
Without expression.
He sings his wordless songs
That smell of death
And passes on.
He hears and touches
And then with breathless
Sighs and wrinkled brow
And boneless face
That never shows
How he can know
Our inner selves,
Lets us see within
His soul
And passes on.

Sonny Hyles

"REQUIEM"

We blew all night, until it was gone and done. I spat into the yellow basin and rubbed the stubble on my chin. Charley came in a little after nine, too early for him.

"We had it baby, man did we ever have it."

"Where's the Daddy," I said.

"Still in bed."

I was packing and didn't want to talk. I was thinking about last night. Two horns, a bass, a piano, and drums. Five voices mingled and then unified. We blew, all right, we really had it. Cool, man, cool. I'm going home, I thought to myself. Back south, New Orleans. Too long gone with nothing but a bass and eight dollars and some change. Time's passed. I'm old, like Charley and Daddy and Phil and Bix. Too old too soon. Go on home, I said silently, while you've still got some time.

"Where we going from here", Charley said.

"To where. Home for me."

"Home? After last night? Man, we had 'em." He smacked his fist. "We had 'em right here."

"Who did we have, Charley? Who? Some niggers and some kids? How many? I'm tired. I'm going home."

Charley shrugged and walked next door to his room. I heard him close the door while I was looking in the mirror. I spat out the taste of stale smoke and sat down on the john. The last gig, I thought, in some dirty cellar in St. Louis. Blowing your guts out for ten bucks apiece. I remembered Bix when he was young, not like last night. Coming out of a slide and letting go with those low smooth ones--St. James Infirmary. And the Daddy, lips puckered, blowing out his brains. And Charley keeping the beat on his skins. Phil could play all night, adlibbing it, just banging those keys till his fingers were nubs. And me, keeping us in there with the strings, taking off and jamming. Yeh, we had it last night, but who cares anymore?

They all walked in, slow like, all but the Daddy. He never got up after a session till lunch time or after. Bix and Phil sat down on the bed. Charley just sort of stood there, kinda shaking, trembling.

"What's up", I said. "No use talking. I've got it up to get out. Now. I just can't see it anymore."

Charley's eyes filled up and I knew something was happening. Phil looked at the floor, his hands folded up in his lap. Bix just looked up and told me, real quiet like.

"The Daddy's dead. He just shot himself so full of 'H' that he died. He blew it all out last night and he died this morning."

I just looked at them, lit a cigarette, and walked out the door, down to the cellar. I picked up my bass and they were all there. We played for awhile, Charley with tears rolling down his black cheeks, making them look all shiny and ebony-like, Phil, going real easy, not banging, just sort of back there, off in the distance. Bix and me and Daddy, real slow. He was there for a time.

We played awhile and then went looking for another horn.

Sonny Hyles

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34 MATCHES

"The Second and Last Note from the Others"

In petty paradises of saintly virtues,
 Virgins sing with red-rimmed eyes
 And hollow voices,
 Constant hymns with contrivances
 That make us wonder
 What makes it go.
 It is a constipation of the mind,
 Thoughts not from the mind
 But from the groin.
 I await the coming and the second coming
 And the final orgasm,
 Gasping, grasping with hands
 Outstretched to unknown gods,
 Many colored rains that cleanse
 And then baptize us into the fold.
 It is an antiseptic for the brain,
 Stealing our nerves
 So that we may lie together
 Without hope.
 I await the last trump,
 Not with faith, but pity.
 Sonny Hyles

"From East To West"

Great rusted bones of the desert
 Trace glazed sands to scabs of mountains
 Probing purple skies.
 Apache warriors long arisen
 Roam these plains with rusted lances
 In quest of pinkie souldo soldiers.
 Mammoth cement villages choke
 With industrial campfires while
 The truth goes marching off to
 Other wars in the East
 (The west now conquered)

"For Beth"

A blood red ribbon is the morning dawn;
 And as I slowly find my way along,
 I stop, bend low, and with deliberate care
 Pick one minute and perfect pale wild rose.
 This slender sprig I hold against the sky.
 Then I gently press its satin petals,
 Whisper a name and breathe a silent prayer;
 Overhead, a pale grey dove wings its way
 To the east, the messenger of my thought,
 As the dawn rises up over India.
 Elke Williams

Travel far into the sands by day,
 Lay still at night
 And you may still hear the coyote
 howl.
 But you shan't see the buffalo roam.
 Charles T. Gay

DEFINITION:

LOVE is being behind
 (in tennis)

"The First Dream"

I have in nights in blackness steeped seen
 Witches and warlocks take their marriage vows
 And phantom priests at a funeral pyre
 Shout and sacrifice the sacred cows.
 I have lived with firms and gnomes and beings
 Yet unnamed. I have slept with vampires.
 Sonny Hyles

"J.C. and the Boy"

I walked slowly down the main street of the darkened town. "Stupid little berg. Rolls up the sidewalks after six o'clock. Nothing to do, and my last ride left me stranded here."

I walked around the three blocks that they called the "Business section" of the town before I grew tired and used the curb for a seat. "Damn! Last cigarette and nothing open." I crumpled the package in disgust and threw it against the nearest store front.

"It's getting cold. I had better find a place to sleep tonight." I walked back down the block and turned to the left looking for a place to sleep. Two blocks down was a small frame church building weather-gray from lack of paint. "Wonder if these Hicks ever lock their doors?" The door wasn't locked, so I looked in, and finding the church empty, walked down to the front. I flopped on the front pew and looked around at the drab interior; flaky paint, cracked plaster, and warped floors.

The lights from the street streamed in the window and reflected on a small picture of Jesus with a bleeding heart and pierced hands. Underneath the picture hung a small cross. "Nice picture. Mother use to have one like that." I remember when I was six, and momma took my hand and lead me to the picture, and said, 'Son, always look to Him. He will never fail you.' That was mom all right. Always telling me to look to the Lord and he would take care of all my troubles. What's that verse she was all the quoting? Oh yeah! "All ye that are heavy-laden, come unto me and I will give you rest!" Tears tried to come to my eyes but stayed just behind my eye-lids.

I remember mom's funeral. The preacher even used that verse and I cried, but that was a long time ago.

"I shouldn't've come in here. Too many memories." I ran down the aisle, slammed the door behind me, then paused on the steps listening to the silence of the night. "Maybe I can walk out to the road and catch a ride to Chicago, or worse where with bright lights."

Genette McGuire

"My Son! My Son!"

I turned from the fireplace,
Hands still warm from blistering heat;
Saw you coming down the road --
With ragged clothes and a weary look --
And ran to embrace you;
My returning Son.
Three years since you left son,
A long, long time without hearing a word.
Where have you been Son -- so raggedly dressed --
Far away?

I have seen the
Whores frolicking through dark streets
In babylon, and ate pig-slops
In foreign lands.
My Son! My Son! A robe for my Son.
Kill the fatted calf! Eat, drink,
Dance,
My Son is home.

Genette McGuire

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"Dear Abbey"

Like pinnacles of masculinity,
 We sit steeped in odorous draughts of ram's musk
 And bull's hide and dreaming,
 Suck in beautiful images
 Demanding that we buy Schlitz or nothing at all
 Or, that we'd rather fight than switch
 Or, rather switch than fight
 Or, some other indignity heaped upon us.
 We, who continue to offer ourselves,
 Smilingly ordering our favorite brand of crud,
 Which threatens to devour us in turn
 Under Madison Avenue subtleties
 And with slick-shaven cheeks
 Smelling of esters derived from jellyfish
 We smile our sparkling, invisible shield
 Of forty percent fewer cavities
 To sterilized young women,
 Who brightly throw out lines of Freud
 And secretly damn the inevitable double standard
 And how little good these trite phrases will do them
 As they reach down into their sudsy pan
 Of white tornado juice
 Or, skate jet-powered across shiney, gleaming kitchens,
 Disinfected and deodorized --
 Just as barren of warmth as they are,
 Whose thoughts turn once again
 To the world of tinkling trinkets on wrists and ears
 And that voice of their savior saying: "Avon calling!"

Bill Armstrong

"To the Armless Minstrel Boy"

I am sitting on stone chairs
 Looking out for roadsigns.
 I am walking down sidewalks,
 Haunting billboards.
 I am constantly hoping for a song
 To rise and poems to be read
 To music in cellars and private homes.
 And I am looking for a technological revolution
 To knock on our inner doors
 And end all revolutions.
 I am contemplating self-destruction
 Without really believing in it.
 And the world is spinning around
 A sun with ourselves standing
 And laying and laughing while
 We fly out in the expanding universe.
 Imagine that
 I am sitting on stone chairs
 Looking at my pedestal
 And awaiting the new religion.
 I am constantly hoping that a song will rise
 And someone will be there to sing it.

Sonny Hyles

"Mr. Smith's Progress"

The last sweeping bend of the county road brought him to that utopia of exurbia, Paradise Valley. It was already incorporated, the sign proudly announcing that 201 citizens resided there. Civilization had come at last to the sleepy little county of Southern Florida, some 40 odd miles from Miami. University professors, business and professional people were among its highly prominent residents.

As Smith saw the stately, rambling homes in the \$50,000 bracket, he felt pride well up in his chest as the developer of such a handsome project. He pulled his car to a stop on the road overlooking columned colonials and split-level ranch homes. Their strikingly green, fertilized lawns and blue pools of all shapes created a myriad of color and pattern. But most of all, to Smith, it represented the inevitability of civilization — progress.

Glancing furtively around, he drew a little black book from the glove compartment and opened it, tracing down the columns of statistics with his finger. He chuckled to himself. Already, after only one year of existence, Paradise Valley had recorded a murder: the slaying of a prominent Miami businessman caught in a triangle by an irate petroleum engineer. This, coupled with two suicides and a healthy divorce rate made things look promising. There had been an outbreak of juvenile delinquency, another first for Seminole County.

Smith had about given up on his county until he thought of bringing the city to it. The uneducated, rural folk were unsusceptible to progress, being tied to the myths of religion and morality. Paradise Valley was indeed a lucky stroke for him.

Pulling up to the little real estate office, he got out and walked briskly across the lawn to greet a couple waiting for him.

"Smith's the name — yes, the developer. Sure nice to meet you folks. Fine little community we have here. High priority settlement — real progressive community. Fine atmosphere for bringing up children — all the folks are good, educated city people. Yes — and we intend to keep it that way!"

Bill Armstrong

"Seeds"

Too late we thought
Of the more frequent overflowings
Of the soul. Too late,
They became visions —
Future directions —
To exhalt, twist
And make the Puzzle complete;
Now here before you people,
As all people, jumped bare
Upon myself, made waste,
Abort all Eves,
With vulgar, sweet appraisals.

Jim Harris

"Old Man"

What use are you old man?
Too old to ride hard,
Mend fence, or look for strays.
Your only job, to gather eggs
And sit in rocking-chair
To let the sun smile
On your weather-beaten face.
What use?
To hear the creak of rockers
On your porch-bound steed,
And dream of days that used to be:
The thunder of stampeding hoofs,
And roar from swift gun.
Now, revelling in ancient glory,
You dream yourself to death.

Gemette McGuire

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from critical paper on Tiny Alice

Stephen C. Pepper's contextualistic type of criticism is the proper method of evaluation of Tiny Alice, because the play's ambiguous nature makes it impossible for the observer to receive clear, individual interpretations with one viewing of the play. It is a puzzle and must be studied. And if the play is to be worth while or valuable as a work of art, it will be so because it deepens the intellectual experience of the audience.

Pepper in The Work of Art states that an artistic creation is not a single object but a "nest of objects." This "nest" consists of: a vehicle or control object, the immediate perceptions of that object, and a funding of those perceptions which results in the object of criticism. This is the process of the contextualist.

It goes without saying that a work of art is more than emotion. But emotion, I believe, is the most important factor in the reception of the immediate perceptions. Pepper says there is not only satisfaction (emotional and intellectual) involved in the perception, but a vivid realization of the immediate quality of the experience. The emotions determine this vividness, and coupled with the emotions involved in the satisfaction of the immediate perceptions, they (the emotions) dominate the aesthetic experience.

Tiny Alice lacks the necessary order of events, that is, plot and individual scenes, to evoke serviceable emotional response. At the end of act two Brother Julian submits to the sexual enticements of Miss Alice. But the audience fails to respond to what normally would be an emotion situation, because Miss Alice is not human and Brother Julian has failed to make his predicament associatable. By no means is stark verisimilitude a prerequisite for emotional response. However, Albee has made his characters and their plight abstract to the point of making the experience with the work a totally intellectual one. Tiny Alice is art minus emotion, which is not art. Albee has made little of what is theoretically very emotional material.

...Disunity results from the spasmodic and highly symbolic nature of many of the speeches. Symbolism in the Albee play has gotten out of hand; that is, the observer becomes so involved with the meaning of characters and their speech and actions, that symbolism almost becomes the subject of the play. Albee, to be sure, didn't produce the play for this end. What he does in the play, though is show an intense interest in a message. This destroys unity and aesthetic value.

Jim Harris

from "Ames in Sister Carrie"

One point is very clear: Ames does not understand Carrie. He thinks he does, but Dreiser makes it apparent that he does not. Listening to music at the Vance's home, he asks of Carrie, "Isn't that a pathetic strain?" She blurts out an unfinished comment about what music does to her -- not really knowing -- and Ames assures her that he knows how she feels. Carrie is unable to feel anything for music, and Ames is unable to see this lack of feeling. He believes Carrie's nature places her in a class that should do more serious drama, an idea Carrie is aware only through him. Ames tells Carrie that when he first saw her, her mouth was curved in a manner which expressed sorrow. Actually she was extremely happy that night and wished the evening to continue. Ames is placing some mask of melancholic intellectualism on Carrie, making her in an image he wants. He tells her "You ought not to be melancholy."

(continued next page)

Sister Carrie (continued)

Ames does reflect Dreiser's idea of the purposeless nature of life. He says, "The world is full of desireable situations, but, unfortunately, we can occupy but one at a time. It doesn't do us any good to wring our hands over the far off things." Here is the irony of Ames' position. He is intelligent in the eyes of Carrie, but he is not intelligent or perceptive enough to understand someone as simple as she. He fills Carrie's head full of notions about herself, notions far beyond what she is capable of achieving. He describes to her the ridiculous mask that he has placed upon her face, and Carrie succumbs to the deception. She longs "to be equal to this feeling written upon her countenance."

Ames is a useless character. He seems to be interposed near the end of the novel to whet Carrie's appetite one more time, while the reader, already aware of Carrie's nature watches her become unhappy again. Anyone could have served this purpose, and the man gives the novel no more than what has already been given by Drouet and Hurstwood.

Jim Harris

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